

could take action." We need to find out the truth, we need to find out the answer, and we need to move forward.

Madam President, we have a wonderful opportunity yet remaining in the waning hours to pass the Presidio parks bill. After much dedicated work on both sides of the aisle over in the House and with the administration on Friday and Saturday, the House passed a Presidio parks bill with many important parts for this country in it. There is only one body that has to act on this bill, and that is the U.S. Senate. If we can all agree, we can pass, by unanimous consent, this Presidio parks bill.

As I understand it, it includes many wonderful projects all over this country. It would be an environmental gift for the people of this country, and I can tell you that my leader, Senator DASCHLE, expressed to me his great interest in seeing us do it, and from the remarks of the majority leader, Senator LOTT, I feel very optimistic that we can.

From the East to the West, the North and the South, there are parts in this bill that I think we all want. Does everybody get everything he or she might want? Of course not. It is never possible. The Presidio parks bill is one of great compromise, even on the issue that I care so much about.

On the Presidio itself, we had to compromise. So I don't think any Member can say it is a perfect bill. There may be something in there you don't love, and there may be something not included in there you want included, but I think we do have an opportunity to do something for the American people and go home and be extremely proud. The Presidio Park will become a jewel of the National Park System, and the legislation encompasses a wonderful idea that really was brought to the table from the Pennsylvania Avenue Corporation when we remodeled and rejuvenated Pennsylvania Avenue, and it is a board of trustees totally nonprofit with experts in real estate and experts in historic preservation sitting on it and overseeing it.

Congresswoman PELOSI has worked so hard on this—I used to represent the Presidio when I was in the House—as well as Congressman GEORGE MILLER, Senator FEINSTEIN, Senator MURKOWSKI, and Senator CHAFEE and many others. I do hope that we can pass the parks bill by unanimous consent, but I have asked my leader to keep us here, because I do believe if we had to vote on a cloture motion, we could carry that cloture vote, and we would overwhelmingly pass this parks bill.

Madam President, I hope we can do it quickly, but, if not, I hope we will stay here and work for the American people, resolve the FAA problem, resolve this parks bill, pass this continuing resolution and go home feeling proud that we have a safer Nation, we have a stronger Nation, and we have a more beautiful Nation.

Thank you very much. I now yield to my friend.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized. Mr. CONRAD. I thank the Chair.

THE CLINTON RECORD AND SENATOR DOLE'S ECONOMIC AGENDA

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, we have now come to what may be the last day of the congressional session. Perhaps it will take another day or two for Congress to adjourn.

I would just like to observe that this is what we have been handed on the final day. I do not know how many pages are here. I assume it is at least a thousand pages. We are handed this massive bill—that few of us have seen—because once again Congress has failed to do its job on time.

Here we are on the eve of the next fiscal year, and six appropriations bills have to be rolled into one in order to prevent a shutdown of Government. Madam President, this is not the way to do business. I doubt there are very many Members who have any idea what is in this omnibus consolidated appropriations bill. I certainly do not.

We got this stack this morning. We are going to vote, they tell us, sometime this evening. You know, I am a pretty fast reader, but I do not think I can get this job done in time to make any kind of reasoned judgment on what is included. This is not the way we ought to do our business.

Madam President, it does seem to me to be an appropriate time to review the record of what has happened over the last several years. I would just like to start with the question of deficit reduction, because we hear a lot of talk about who is conservative and who is not conservative. Frankly, I do not think it matters so much who is liberal, who is conservative; I think what the American people are interested in is who gets results, because that is at the end of the day what really matters.

If we look at our last three Presidents on the question of the deficits, the results are now very clear. We look back to 1981, President Reagan inherited a deficit of about \$79 billion. Very quickly the deficit skyrocketed to over \$200 billion, and it was stuck at that figure for most of his term. At the end of President Reagan's term we saw some slight improvement, but still the deficit was about twice as high as the deficit he had inherited. So it is not surprising that the American debt grew dramatically during those years.

Then, of course, came the Bush administration. President Bush inherited a deficit of \$153 billion, and it promptly went out of control. In the last year of the Bush Presidency, the deficit was up to \$290 billion.

Then President Clinton came in, and in each and every year of the Clinton administration, the deficit has gone down; \$255 billion the first year, down to \$116 billion this year. So the President has done an outstanding job of deficit reduction.

Some have said, "Well, he doesn't really deserve any credit." It is inter-

esting to look at what an impartial observer says. The head of the Federal Reserve, Chairman Greenspan, says the deficit reduction in President Clinton's 1993 economic plan was "an unquestioned factor in contributing to the improvement in economic activity that occurred thereafter." Certainly Mr. Greenspan is correct.

We passed in 1993 an economic plan that cut spending and that raised revenue, and that in combination reduced the budget deficit. Because the deficit was coming down, interest rates came down, and economic activity increased. Mr. Greenspan says that plan was "an unquestioned factor in contributing to the improvement in economic activity that occurred thereafter."

Perhaps this is an appropriate time to start looking at the record. What did happen? Well, one of the things we often talk about is the misery index. The misery index is a measure of unemployment and inflation.

Look what has happened to the misery index over the last 28 years. We have the lowest misery index now, after 4 years of the Clinton administration, the lowest misery index in 28 years.

The good news does not stop there. We have also seen strong economic growth under the Clinton administration. Real private-sector economic growth, under the Bush administration, averaged 1.3 percent. Under the Clinton administration, real private-sector GDP growth has averaged 3.2 percent; a very good record and a dramatic improvement over what we have seen previously.

Real business fixed investment. I think one of the best measures of whether an economic plan is successful is what happens to real business fixed investment. We can see that under President Clinton, we have the best rate of increase in real business fixed investment of any President since World War II. If we look at the last 4 years—since the Clinton administration took control, since we passed the 1993 economic plan—we see a dramatic increase in business fixed investment, in fact, the best record that we have seen in decades.

President Clinton delivered on his promise to reduce the deficit—we can all recall he said he would cut it in half. It was \$290 billion in the year before he took office. He has more than met that promise. He has reduced the deficit to \$116 billion, a 60-percent reduction.

That is not the only promise he has delivered on with his economic plan. He said his plan would deliver 8 million new jobs. But instead, we now have over 10 million new jobs created during the Clinton administration.

Let me just turn to one other matter because unemployment is also a very significant measuring point as to how well an economic plan is doing.

Back in December 1992, before Bill Clinton came into office, the unemployment rate in this country was 7.3

percent—7.3 percent. In June of this year it was down to 5.3 percent, a dramatic reduction in unemployment. In fact, we now know the unemployment rate fell to 5.1 percent in August 1996. That is the lowest level of unemployment that we have had in 7 years.

Last week we got more good news with respect to what was happening in the economy. The Census Bureau issued its analysis of what has been occurring. What we found is that incomes have been going up and poverty has been coming down, another good measure of whether or not an economic plan is working. In fact, what we saw was that median household income is up the largest increase in a decade.

We saw the largest decline in income inequality in 27 years.

We saw 1.6 million fewer people in poverty, the largest drop in 27 years.

We saw the poverty rate for elderly Americans at 10.5 percent, its lowest level ever, lowest level ever in terms of the number of elderly living in poverty; again, I think a good measure of how well this Clinton economic plan has worked.

I might say, I was proud to have voted for that plan. We had a tie vote here in the U.S. Senate, broken by a vote of the Vice President of the United States. Our friends on the other side of the aisle said this economic plan, the results of which I have just reported on, would crater the economy. That was their commentary at the time. They said it would increase the deficit. They said it would increase interest rates. They said it would increase unemployment. They were wrong on every count. They were wrong on every single count.

Madam President, we have seen the results of the Clinton economic plan. I think that raises the question of what would the Dole economic plan do?

Senator Dole, running for President, has said that he has a plan, and the cornerstone of that plan is a \$550 billion tax cut. I thought, in order to put in perspective what the Dole plan is likely to do, that we ought to look ahead to the next 6 years, because his plan covers the next 6 years.

It is very interesting. If one looks at what we are facing in the next 6 years, from 1997 to 2002, this is the projected spending of the United States under current law. We would spend \$11.3 trillion. But this is our income. Our income is only \$9.9 trillion. So we are going to be adding \$1.4 trillion to the national debt—debt held by the public.

The first thing Senator Dole says we ought to do is cut the revenue another \$550 billion, reducing it to \$9.4 trillion. So, now the gap between income and outgo is bigger. He is digging the hole deeper before he starts filling it in. He is adding to the debt. That is going in precisely the wrong direction.

If one looks at what is necessary for an economic plan to add up, one finds the following: We would need \$584 billion of spending cuts necessary to balance the unified budget. That includes

all spending and all revenues—that is the unified budget. That includes the Social Security surpluses that we are scheduled to run over the next 6 years. So we would need \$584 billion of spending cuts in order to balance the unified budget. But Senator Dole says he wants a \$551 billion tax cut. So now we would need \$1.1 trillion of cuts in order to balance the unified budget and prevent adding to the debt held by the public over this next 6-year period.

It does not stop there. Senator Dole's plan assumes that he is going to count all of the Social Security surpluses over the next 6 years to help balance the budget. That is \$525 billion of Social Security surpluses. Now, if we were really going to honestly balance this budget, we would need the \$584 billion of spending cuts just to balance the unified budget, then we need the \$551 billion to cover his tax cut so we do not add to the debt, then we need another \$525 billion so that we are not raiding the Social Security trust funds. So now we need \$1.6 trillion in spending cuts.

Madam President, we will look at what Senator Dole is proposing and see if he meets those tests. Does he come up with \$1.1 trillion of cuts to prevent adding to the debt with his tax cut? Or does he honestly balance with \$1.6 trillion of cuts necessary to prevent raiding the Social Security trust fund? What are the cuts he has come up with? Has he come up with anything close to \$1.1 trillion to prevent adding to the debt to cover his tax cut, or to really do the job and have \$1.6 trillion of cuts to prevent raiding the Social Security trust fund?

Here is the spending that is outlined over the next 6 years under current law. Social Security, \$2.1 trillion, about 20 percent of projected spending over the next 6 years. Interest on the debt, nearly as much, \$2 trillion. Defense, \$1.7 trillion. Of course, Senator Dole says defense is off the table. He will not cut defense, he will not cut Social Security. Medicare is \$1.6 trillion projected over the next 6 years. Medicaid, almost \$1 trillion over the next 6 years. Other entitlements—student loans, food stamps, child nutrition—those are other entitlements. Then we have nondefense discretionary, which is \$1.7 trillion over the next 6 years. Nondefense discretionary is roads, bridges, law enforcement, jails, parks—all of that is in nondefense discretionary.

Now, we will look for a moment at whether or not Senator Dole's plan adds up. Taking the savings he has talked about, he said he will take a sliver out of the \$1.6 trillion of Medicare, and he has that savings of \$158 billion. So that is in the cookie jar. We will see when we are done if he has \$1.1 trillion of cuts or the \$1.6 trillion necessary to prevent raiding the Social Security trust fund. We have so far in the cookie jar \$158 billion of Medicare cuts. He says on Medicaid, he will take a sliver out of that, which is the equivalent

to \$72 billion, and we will put that down and it is in the cookie jar. That is \$72 billion of Medicaid cuts. He also says he will take a chunk out of other entitlements, which is right here. He will take a chunk out of this spending category. And, again, he is talking about \$124 billion of other entitlements—again, that is child nutrition and a number of other areas we have talked about, including food stamps, Federal retirement, student loans. He has \$124 billion there. We will put that in the cookie jar. Then he says he will cut nondefense discretionary. That is one of his biggest cuts, nondefense discretionary. He has \$300 billion that we can put in the cookie jar out of nondefense discretionary spending.

What is nondefense discretionary spending? That is an area in which we are projected to spend \$1.7 trillion over the next 6 years. He has \$300 billion in cuts out of that category. That is roads, bridges, airports, education, law enforcement. That is the biggest place he is cutting.

Does that make sense? Is that where we want to cut in this country—education, roads, bridges, airports, law enforcement? Well, Senator Dole says cut that \$300 billion. He is not done yet because he also has some interest savings, a little sliver of interest savings. That is \$50 billion of interest savings.

Then Senator Dole sees he is nowhere close to adding up so he goes back to the spending pie and he says, "I have to take some more out of 'other entitlements.' I have to take some more out of child nutrition, student loans. I have to take some more out of Federal retirement." So he comes up with another \$66 billion of other entitlements. But still he is nowhere close to adding up. He is at about \$750 billion so far, so he is way short of adding up to the \$1.1 trillion necessary to keep from adding to the debt to finance his tax cuts. So he is way short.

What he does is go back to nondefense discretionary spending again, hits that again. Education, roads, bridges, airports, law enforcement, environmental protection. He says take another \$150 billion out of that category and put it in the cookie jar.

Now, one can see he is drastically cutting this category of spending. Senator Dole started with \$302 billion in nondefense discretionary cuts, and then he took another \$150 billion out of this category. So he is up to \$450 billion out of nondefense discretionary spending, which is \$1.7 trillion to begin with. We are talking about cutting education, roads, bridges, airports, law enforcement, and jails by 30 percent in the Dole economic plan. But still it does not add up. Still it does not add up. If you add up all of what he has talked about cutting, he is just over \$900 billion. And we showed on the previous chart that you need \$1.1 trillion in cuts in order to prevent adding to the debt because of his tax cut. And you need \$1.6 trillion of cuts if you are going to avoid raiding the Social Security trust fund.

So if \$1.1 trillion is the test, Senator Dole has a \$200 billion gap here in terms of spending cuts. Even with that, he has taken huge chunks out of education, roads, bridges, airports, law enforcement. He says he is going to be tough on law enforcement, but he takes 30 percent of the money that we are projected to spend over the next 6 years out of the category that law enforcement spending comes from. If he is not going to cut law enforcement as much, he is going to have to cut education more. He is going to have to cut roads more or airports or bridges more. Still he is nowhere close to adding up.

Madam President, it just seems to me that the Dole plan is at least \$200 billion short of adding up, and that even assumes that Senator Dole is going to use all \$525 billion of Social Security surpluses.

Well, it doesn't take an awful lot of mathematical calculation to figure out the problem. We remember the last budget that was offered by his party had \$245 billion of tax cuts, and in order to help finance that, they had \$163 billion in reductions to Medicaid. All you have to do to reality test here is ask what would be the Medicaid cuts necessary to finance the bigger Dole tax cut? Because instead of a \$245 billion tax cut, he is now talking about a \$550 billion tax cut. How big would the Medicaid cuts have to be? They were \$163 billion to accommodate a \$245 billion tax cut. How big would they have to be to accommodate a \$550 billion tax cut?

Domestic discretionary spending. The same way. Under the previous Republican budget, they had \$245 billion of tax cuts. They had domestic discretionary cuts of \$440 billion. In order to accommodate the tax cut and move toward a balanced budget, how big would those domestic discretionary cuts have to be to accommodate a \$550 billion tax cut?

The same question can be raised about Medicare. Medicare, they proposed reducing \$270 billion. I know some say, well, it is not a cut. Well, how did they save \$270 billion if it is not a cut? How did they save \$270 billion if they didn't cut anything? Of course, they cut something. They cut from what current law provides. Why? Because they needed to accommodate their \$245 billion tax cut and move toward a balanced budget. How big would the Medicare cuts have to be if you are going to have a \$550 billion tax cut instead of a \$245 billion tax cut? Obviously, something has to give here. Either the cuts have to be much deeper, or the Dole plan is actually going to add to the deficit, add to the debt. That would be a profound mistake, in my judgment.

Senator Dole has said Social Security is off the table. Is it really? Is it really off the table? I showed the chart that indicated in his plan he is counting on using \$525 billion of Social Security surpluses in the next 6 years in order to help move toward balance.

Very interesting. Madam President, \$525 billion out of Social Security surpluses and a \$550 billion tax cut. Does that make any sense? Does it make sense to take every penny of Social Security surplus and turn right around and give it out in terms of a tax cut—a tax cut that disproportionately goes to the wealthiest among us?

You know, we hear that claim made. What is the evidence? So I had this chart prepared. The Dole tax cuts—who benefits? Who are the big winners? This looks at all of his tax cut plans put together. If you are in the under \$10,000 a year category of income, and 19 percent of American families are in that category, you get \$5 on average. If you are in the \$10,000 to \$20,000 a year category, that is 21 percent of the American people, you get \$120 a year, \$10 a month, on average. If you are in the \$20,000 to \$30,000 category, about 16 percent of the American people, you get \$400 a year, about \$30 a month, on average. Look at the top end here. The top 1 percent of the American people. Those earning over \$200,000 a year. What do they get? Well, they get the cake. They get, on average, \$25,000 a year of tax reduction. Madam President, \$25,000 a year of tax reduction.

So if you are in the 50 percent of the American people that have less than \$30,000 a year of income, you are going to get anywhere from \$5 a year to \$30 a month, on average, at the top end of that scale. But if you are up here and you earn over \$200,000 a year, you are going to get a \$25,000 reduction, on average. Is that fair? Does that make any sense? Does it make any sense to add to the debt, add to the deficits, so we can give a \$25,000 a year tax break to the top 1 percent, who earn over \$200,000 a year? Is that what we ought to do in this country? Does that make sense?

Does it make sense to take \$525 billion of Social Security surpluses—money we are going to need to get ready for when the baby boom generation retires, and give it all out in a tax cut, the vast majority of which goes to people earning over \$200,000 a year? Does that make any sense? Does it make any sense to propose a plan that has \$900 billion in spending cuts, when you need at least \$1.1 trillion of spending cuts to accommodate Senator Dole's tax cut and not add to the debt? And you would need \$1.6 trillion of spending cuts not to raid the Social Security trust fund. And he only comes up with \$900 billion of cuts. The cuts he has come up with come out of non-defense discretionary spending. He is cutting that category 30 percent, even though his plan doesn't add up. The part that he is really hammering is education, roads, bridges, airports, law enforcement, jail construction. Does that make any sense for America's future?

Madam President, when one looks at where the money is going over the next 6 years, it is very interesting. Defense spending \$1.7 trillion. Social Security

\$2.1 trillion. Interest on the debt \$2 trillion. Medicare \$1.6 trillion. Medicaid just under \$1 trillion. This is where the money is going. Other entitlements—that is child nutrition, student loans, that is food stamps, and non-defense discretionary, \$1.7 trillion, as I have said. That is education, roads, bridges, airports, law enforcement.

I just think we have to ask ourselves: What works? What do we know works? We know, based on the evidence I provided earlier, that the Clinton economic plan that we passed in 1993 has worked. It is undeniable. Four years in a row of deficit reduction. Let us go back to the chart that we began with. I think it is a good place to end. We know what works. The plan that we passed in 1993 reduced the deficit every year for 4 years in a row. More than a 60 percent reduction. We need to stay on that course, because we face the demographic time bomb of the baby boom generation. When they retire, the demands on Federal programs are going to explode. That is why we need to stay on this course of deficit reduction. It is one reason that this course of deficit reduction that is paid off so handsomely. Not only have we reduced the deficit but unemployment got reduced.

All of the things that you would like to see going up are going up. Jobs are going up. Income is going up. Business investment is going up. The things you would like to see going down are going down. Poverty is going down. Unemployment is going down. The deficit is going down.

This is a plan that has worked. And I believe it would be a profound mistake to go in this direction—this radical direction—that Senator Dole has prescribed that clearly doesn't add up. Either he is going to have much bigger cuts in things like education, Medicare, Medicaid, roads, or bridges that he has already outlined—and he has already outlined massive cuts in those areas—or he is going to absolutely explode this deficit. And that would be a profound mistake for this country's future.

I hope over the coming weeks that we in this country will have a serious national debate about these issues because this is critical to America's future. We have a chance to stay on course. We have an opportunity to keep moving this country in the right direction. I very much hope that, as we go through these last 5 weeks of the political campaign, that the American people will keep in mind the progress that has been made. We have made important progress—strengthening our national economy. We cannot go back to a failed policy that put this country in the ditch once before, that exploded the deficits, that exploded the debt, and that weakened America; that put us in a condition of economic decline against our competitors. That would be a tragedy.

Hopefully, we have learned from our failures of the past and the more recent

successes that we have enjoyed since the Clinton economic plan was passed.

I thank the Chair.

I yield the floor.

I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE FAA REAUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, the pending business before the Senate is the continuing resolution, the large appropriations bill. But there are a couple of other items—one of which we discussed earlier this morning—that must be resolved by this Congress.

I wanted to just mention again why the FAA reauthorization bill is critical. We have talked about the issue of aviation safety and security this morning. But I want to mention to my colleagues one other item that is in this bill that I think is critically important. It deals with the issue of the essential air service program, and the ability to provide airline service to even rural areas of our country.

I have said before—and I know it is repetitious but I want to say again—that, in my judgment, the issue of airline deregulation has been terribly hurtful to many rural States in our country.

Prior to airline deregulation, the State which I represent here in the Congress had numerous jet carriers serving the airline service needs of North Dakota. We had the old Western Airlines, we had Republic Airlines, the old North Central which later became Republic, Northwest Airlines, Frontier Airlines, and Continental Airlines. At various times we have had a wide range of jet carrier service in North Dakota.

But since airline deregulation we now have one carrier serving our State with jet service—Northwest Airlines. Northwest is a fine carrier. I think they provide good service. But, as all of us know, the market system works best only when you have competition. Competition means that people vie for the customers' business by better service and/or lower prices. And when you have one carrier you do not have price competition.

We put in place an essential air service program when airlines were deregulated in this country some 15 or so years ago, and the essential air service program was designed to try to provide some basic protection for rural areas recognizing that the deregulation may mean that the major airlines will go compete between Chicago and Los Angeles, Los Angeles and New York, and New York and Miami. They are not going to rush to go compete between smaller cities and smaller markets.

So the essential airline service program was developed. It was originally

developed and authorized, and expended about \$80 million a year; then down to \$70 million; then \$50 million; and, then \$30 million. Now it is down to about \$25 million a year just providing a skeleton of support for airline service in small communities in our country.

This piece of legislation creates a new and unique way to permanently resolve the essential airline service program at a healthy rate of funding—fully financed—that will be helpful to rural areas all across this country.

Madam President, if I were to leave Washington, DC, today to fly to Los Angeles, CA, and I purchased a ticket with a 2-week advance, with a Saturday night stay and with all of the requirements that the airlines have on those who purchase these tickets, it would cost probably in the neighborhood of \$250 to fly from here all the way across the country to California. The Commerce Committee framed it in terms of going to see Mickey Mouse at Disneyland in Anaheim, CA—about \$250. Then I showed the members of the Commerce Committee a picture of the world's largest cow that sits on top of a hill outside of New Salem, ND. It is called Salem Sue. A giant cow sits on a hill out there not so far from Bismarck. If I wanted to see not Mickey Mouse but Salem Sue instead, and wanted to fly from here to North Dakota half as far as flying from here to Los Angeles, and I made reservations to do that, I would pay twice as much.

In other words, we are left in a circumstance in this country with airline deregulation where—at least with respect to rural areas—if you want to fly twice as far you can pay half as much going to an urban area, but fly to a rural area and fly half as far you will double your ticket price.

Does anyone think there is any rational basis for that? I do not. If you believe that transportation is sometimes repetitious of universal need, and you believe the need for transportation service is relatively universal, it does not make sense to say, "Well, if you live in a very large area of the country you get dirt cheap prices but if you live in a small area of the country, what happens is you just pay through the nose."

What I proposed in the FAA reauthorization bill was an essential air service program that is funded by a fee that is assessed on overflights in this country by foreign carriers. Virtually every country in the world assesses a fee on airlines overflying their space by foreign carriers—virtually every country except the United States. We do not have such a fee. We were intending to promote such a fee, and I propose that when a fee is proposed we attach it, at least part of it, to the essential air service program so that it generates a sufficient amount of money each year; rather than have to go to the Appropriations Committee and seek diminished funding every year for that program, which is essential in providing airline service to rural areas, we

would have a permanent source of funding to fill in where airline deregulation is injuring rural States and smaller communities.

That is what we put in the FAA authorization bill. I authored the piece of legislation. It was supported on a bipartisan basis by Republicans and Democrats. It will permanently solve this problem in a significant way and provide opportunity through better air service in rural parts of our country that have been injured by deregulation. It is simple but effective in solving a real problem.

That is part of this bill. And if this bill dies, that goes. A lot of work over a long period of time to solve a very real problem is going to be gone.

We mentioned earlier this morning that the major issue here, however, is aviation safety and security. The responsibility to pass an FAA authorization bill is one that cannot be abrogated. We cannot end this session of Congress without passing this legislation. I know there is a controversial piece that was attached in conference. Whatever excuse one might want to find for one reason or another to say this is going to have to be delayed, it cannot be voted on now or then, the fact is this Congress cannot adjourn and cannot leave town without addressing this issue. Reauthorizing the functions of the FAA are critical in addressing the aviation safety and security issues that this Congress is obligated to address.

The Senator from Alaska, the Senator from Arizona, and others have spoken this morning, and I would add my voice to theirs, although I might make some different characterizations than I heard in a couple of instances today about what is at stake in this fight, but I would say this. There is no disagreement about the fact that this Congress cannot adjourn unless it resolves this issue. And there will be some of us standing here at the end of this week preventing this Congress from ending its session if it has not enacted an FAA authorization bill that deals with the issue of safety and security in air travel in this country.

I began simply mentioning that there are many other things in this bill which escape a lot of notice, one of which is a critically important piece dealing with improving airline service in rural States and smaller communities across this country which I think is critically needed.

Madam President, I know there are others who want to speak. I did want to add my voice to those who spoke earlier this morning on this FAA reauthorization bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KYL). The Senator from California.

OMNIBUS CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1997

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.